

# Employee Work Values Orientation, Commitment and Performance in the Motor Vehicle Industry in Kenya

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## Abstract

The objective of the study was to establish the role of employee commitment in the relationship between employee work values orientation and employee job performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. This relationship was tested using corresponding null hypothesis. The motivation for the study arose from the observation of employee performance challenges that were witnessed in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. Literature has shown that work values orientation has been associated with employee job performance. This study was based on the social exchange theory. The objective of the study was to establish the mediating role of employee commitment in the relationship between employee work values orientation and employee job performance. Descriptive cross sectional survey was used in the study. The study had a population of 2,895 employees out of which a sample of 351 respondents were randomly chosen for data collection. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaires that were dropped and picked back while others were scanned and emailed back. Data was analyzed using regression models. Test findings showed that employee commitment partially mediates the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance. The significant findings implied that the hypothesis that the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance is not mediated by employee commitment was rejected, and the study objective to examine the effect of employee commitment in the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya positively determined. The study outcomes significantly contributed to theory, policy and practice of work values orientation and its influence on employee job performance. The limitation of the study comprised respondents' attitude and subjectivity that may have crept in due to bias in choosing suitable responses, however the use of structured questionnaires and supervisor responses was meant to corroborate and reduce personal or subjective ways of responding to statements posed. It was also suggested that a further study be done using similar variables on a longitudinal design for generalizability of results. Further, the study recommended that the motor vehicle industry adopts work values orientation, employee commitment and employee competence as joint factors that significantly improve employee job performance.

**Keywords:** work values orientation, extrinsic work values, intrinsic work values, employee commitment, employee job performance

## 1. Background to the Study

Employee job performance determines company success and is a measure of an organization's level of effectiveness and productivity (Colquitt et al., 2001). It is the foundation for organizational performance which ensures long term goals are achieved. Organizations can determine how well workers are fulfilling their goals by continuously evaluating them. Such evaluation can relate to the time it takes for employees to complete tasks, how much they produce, the quality of production and work actions. Employee Job performance attests to the quality and productivity of each worker (Na-Nan et al., 2018). It is important to quantify and understand the factors that affect it as a way of driving performance in key sectors of the global and national economy, considering its importance for profitability and the long-term success of organizations.

Work values orientation has been associated with employee job performance. Intrinsically oriented employees have been linked to more positive performance outcomes than extrinsically oriented employees (Zhang et al. 2018). One of the work attitudes that has been linked to the relationship between employee work values orientation and performance is commitment. The significance of employee commitment in the relationship

between work values orientation and performance is a continuing subject of interest to researchers. Committed employees are generally viewed as an asset to any organization. Literature identifies three forms of employee commitment namely affective, continuance and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Each of these commitment types impacts performance differently. Also related to performance is employee competence.

### *1.1 Work Values Orientation*

Scholars have researched on values as family values, moral values, professional values or work values. Schwartz (2005) describes values as principles or beliefs about the desired end state that transcend particular circumstances, guide selection or assessment of actions and events. Hofstede (2001), on his part, describes value as propensity to favor some states of affairs over others. Values are found to affect decision making and strategy, attitudes and actions, expectations, dedication to work and performance, achievement and innovation, integrity, self-assessment and justification and organizational structure (Connor & Becker, 2003).

Work and general values are highly related variables. However, they have been studied from different perspectives. Work values have been described as what a person wants out of work in general and also what elements of a job are more important to his or her job satisfaction (Duffy, 2010) or goals that one aims to achieve through work such as status, social security in old age, helping society, career growth and an opportunity for creativity and innovation (Frieze et al, 2006). There is general consensus that work values are relatively stable but may change over time triggered by events such as entering the workforce or job change, as well as general presence or absence of rewards (Johnson, 2001).

### *1.2 Employee Commitment*

Employee commitment has been described variously as a state where employees have a psychological liking and dedication to their organization (Farahani et al, 2011), a sense of duty to work and to help achieve the organization's mission and goals (Qureshi et al. 2011) and devotion and loyalty to the organization (Ongori, 2007).

The most widely adopted definition of employee commitment in literature is that of Meyer and Allen (1991). They define employee commitment in three types. In the first type, continuance commitment, employees are committed to the organization because it is too expensive to leave. In the second type, affective commitment, employees are emotionally attached to the organization, they identify themselves with it and are heavily involved in its activities. In the third type, normative commitment, employees remain with the organization out of a feeling of an obligation to do so.

Committed workers provide their organizations with voluntary contribution and input towards their prosperity and success. They display a sense of togetherness with the organization, identifying themselves with its vision, purpose, goals and values. Although employees respond to lack of affection for the organization by quitting, they may not necessarily withdraw from the organization due to the high cost of quitting.

### *1.3 Employee Job Performance*

The scope and meaning of Employee job performance has evolved over time from an initial focus on task requirements defined in job descriptions (Campbell, 1983) to a full range of employee behaviour that contributes to the success of organizations (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). From a task requirements perspective, (Campbell, 1983) define job performance as behavior associated with the accomplishment of expected, specified tasks, or formal role requirements on the part of organizational members.

While from a full range of behaviour perspective, Borman and Motowidlo (1993), define employee job performance as scalable actions, behavior and results one displays over a defined interval of time. They define task performance as consisting of activities that transform raw materials into finished goods and services while contextual performance as constituting activities that support an organization's task performance by maintaining social and psychological context.

Performance measurement varies from organization to organization depending on what the organization wants to achieve in the short term and long term. An organization that focuses on task performance will pay more attention on duties and tasks that are specified in a job description while one that considers contextual performance will evaluate employee performance on activities that contribute to the organization's task performance by maintaining social and psychological context.

Contextual performance evaluation will include employee behaviors relating to helping and cooperating with others, respecting organizational rules and procedures and volunteering to carry out roles which are not part of one's job. This study adopts Borman and Motowidlo's conceptualization of job performance as constituting task

performance and contextual performance which has been used in several studies (Kiowi, 2014, Merriman, 2017, Zhang et al., 2018).

#### *1.4 Motor Vehicle Industry in Kenya*

The motor vehicle industry in Kenya is largely dominated by retail and distribution of finished vehicles, new and used, and after-sales support in servicing and spare parts with small-scale assembly of motor vehicles especially heavy commercial vehicles (KAM, 2020). This study focused on companies engaged in retail and distribution of new vehicles and in providing aftersales support. These companies have a higher impact on Kenya's economy because of their upstream and downstream linkages. Employee commitment challenges shown by high turnover trends, limited opportunities for innovation, lack of career growth opportunities and work life balance are common in the industry (Kungu et al., 2020).

#### *1.5 Research Problem*

A number of researchers have argued for a strong relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance (Chen & Guo, 2016, Merriman, 2017, Shaw & Gupta, 2015). However, such arguments differ as to the extent to which work values orientation directly influences employee job performance (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004, Wang et al., 2013).

Several studies have sought to link work values orientation to a variety of organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, employee retention, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment and employee job performance (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001, Colquitt et al., 2001). Those which have linked work values orientation and employee job performance have adopted different conceptualizations of the study variables (Ueda & Ohzono, 2012, Chen & Guo, 2016, Merriman, 2017).

Studies by Zhang et al (2018) and Cerasoli et al (2014) concluded from their observations that differences in conceptualization of work values yield different results because some use intrinsic while others use extrinsic work values which influence employee performance differently. Employee commitment has previously been studied as a mediator between work values and employee job performance (Liao et al 202, Kidombo et al 2012). These previous studies, however, studied work values as a single variable rather than at the level of intrinsic work values and extrinsic work values hence arriving at inconclusive results.

Despite its strategic significance, the performance of the motor vehicle industry in Kenya has been on the decline. Between the year 2015 and 2019 sale of new motor vehicles declined by 34.9% (KAM, 2020). An investigation into predictor variables for employee job performance as conceptualized in this study provided additional explanation for performance trends in the industry. To the knowledge of the researcher, these relationships are yet to be tested empirically in the motor industry in Kenya.

Studies by Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) and Sarkar (2011) have linked positive employee job performance to intrinsic work values orientation and negative employee job performance to extrinsic work values orientation. Other studies have found contradictory results, linking positive performance to extrinsic work values (Zhang et al 2018). The mediating role of employee commitment has previously been examined based on narrow conceptualizations of work values and employee commitment as single variables (Liao et al 2012, Busienei, 2013).

#### *1.6 Research Objective*

Examine the effect of employee commitment in the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Social Exchange Theory*

Social exchange theory was developed by Homans (1961). The premise of this theory is that parties to any relationship reciprocate with each other depending on what they are gaining out of it. The theory alludes to employment as a relationship in which employees trade effort and loyalty for benefits and social rewards from employers (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). To the extent that both the employee and the employer apply the reciprocity norm to their relationship, favorable treatment received by either party is reciprocated leading to beneficial results for both. The basic proposition of the theory is that social exchange consists of actions that are subject to the rewarding responses of others, which over time provide for mutually rewarding transactions and relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Social exchange provides workers with an avenue through which they can reciprocate their employer's positive behavior (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). When they understand that their employment relationship is founded on

the basis of a fair social exchange, workers would be motivated to engage in contextual activities (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). Scholars like Zafirovski (2005) have argued that while the theory of social exchange lays the framework for explaining and predicting social relationships, it reduces human interaction to an exchange of rewards. Due to its microeconomics origin, it lacks cultural background and cross-cultural variations that characterize social dynamics. The theory remains important in studies of exchange relationships, despite this shortcoming.

### *2.2 Work Values Orientation, Employee Commitment and Employee Job Performance*

Employee commitment has been conceptualized as a mediating variable in a number of studies investigating different work and performance related outcomes. Kidombo et al. (2012) studied the mediating effect of employee commitment in the relationship between human resources strategic orientation and firm performance in large private manufacturing firms in Kenya. The research established a significant mediating effect between affective and continuance commitment with performance. The study conceptualized performance at firm level. This study sought to extend this investigation to employee level performance.

Liao et al. (2012) investigated the mediating role of employee commitment in the relationship between work values orientation and job performance in the green energy industry in Taiwan. The study found that employee commitment mediates the relationship between work values and job performance. However, it did not explain work values types namely intrinsic and extrinsic work values and how they separately influence performance. The distinction is important in studies on work values because intrinsic and extrinsic work values have been found to influence job performance differently (Cerasoli et al., 2014, Zhang et al., 2018).

Other studies have sought to establish linkages between work values orientation and employee commitment. In their study on generational differences in work values and employee commitment in New Zealand, Cennamo and Gardner (2008) found intrinsic and extrinsic values influence affective commitment. In the study, commitment was conceptualized as affective commitment, leaving out continuance and normative commitment types.

On his part, Busienei (2013) found that commitment influenced performance in large manufacturing firms in Kenya. Commitment was studied as a single variable. These are matters of concern conceptually since some researchers have found that affective, continuance and normative commitment influence performance differently (Meyer & Allen, 1991, Kidombo et al., 2012). Because of these differences in conceptualization the mediating role of employee commitment in job performance required further investigation.

### *2.3 Research Hypothesis*

**H<sub>02</sub>:** The relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance is not mediated by employee commitment.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### *3.1 Research Design*

A research design lays out the entire structure, procedures and techniques to be used in a study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). This study was a cross sectional survey since it collected data at a specific point in time across many response units. The selected design was also appropriate because this study sought to establish the existence of relationships among study variables. Cross sectional survey is appropriate where the overall objective is to establish whether significant associations among variables exist at a definite point in time (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). The study therefore satisfied the conditions necessary for use of a cross sectional survey.

### *3.2 Target population*

The target population for this study was the 2,895 employees working in the nine large motor vehicle companies in Kenya. The employee is the unit of analysis. The employees comprise management and non-management staff spread in various departments. These departments include Manufacturing, Human resources, Finance, vehicle sales, Engineering and Aftersales.

### *3.3 Sample Design and Data Collection*

Large companies in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya employ a total of 2,895 employees. This was the target population for the study. To get a representative sample, stratified random sampling technique was used. Stratified sampling was done by company weighted on number of employees. The sample size was determined using the formula recommended by Israel (2009) and which has been used by several researchers, including Mwai (2017):

With the study sample size  $n = 351$ , and population size  $N = 2,895$ , the sample size from each of the nine companies was computed using the number of employees in each company as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Study sample

Name of company	Number of employees	Sample size
Isuzu East Africa Ltd	483	$\frac{483}{2895} \times 351 = 59$
Toyota Kenya Ltd	481	$\frac{481}{2895} \times 351 = 58$
CMC Motors Group Ltd	360	$\frac{360}{2895} \times 351 = 44$
Simba Corporation Ltd	615	$\frac{615}{2895} \times 351 = 75$
D.T Dobie & Company Ltd	300	$\frac{300}{2895} \times 351 = 36$
Inchcape Kenya Ltd	105	$\frac{105}{2895} \times 351 = 13$
Marshalls (K) Ltd	317	$\frac{317}{2895} \times 351 = 38$
Scania East Africa Ltd	131	$\frac{131}{2895} \times 351 = 16$
Tata Africa Holdings Ltd	103	$\frac{103}{2895} \times 351 = 12$
Total	2895	351

To get the final respondents from each company random sampling was used. This approach reduces sampling bias and achieves a high level of representation (Saunders et al., 2007)

Data was collected through two questionnaires. Questionnaire one was completed by respondents where they self-assessed and self-declared responses while questionnaire two was completed by their supervisors to corroborate these self-assessment and self-declarations. The questionnaires consisted of modified versions of scales used in earlier studies which tested and confirmed their validity and reliability.

A Likert-type scale comprising of five points ranging from a very less extent (1) to a very large extent (5) was used. Questionnaire one was structured in five parts. Part A, covers respondent's personal details, part B work values orientation, part C employee commitment, part D employee competence and part E employee job performance.

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### 4.1 Response Rate

The response rate of the study was 89 %. This was considered adequate for the study to proceed to data analysis. Babbie (2004), suggested that a response rate of 80 % and above is excellent for a study, while 60 % to 80 % was considered good and 50 % to 60 % was a moderate response for a study.

##### 4.2 Reliability Test

Reliability measures the consistency of findings that can be depended upon for a measure to be said to be reliable. Cronbach's alpha rule of reliability measurement has been adopted by many researchers who have concurred that Cronbach value from 0.5 is adequate and good for a study hence reliable (Asikhia, 2009, Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Table 2 presents reliability output for variables of the study.

Table 2. Reliability test for variables

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Comments
Work Values Orientation	8	0.698	Reliable
Commitment	14	0.856	Reliable
Employee Job Performance	10	0.885	Reliable

Source: Data analysis (2023).

The study used four variables namely; work values orientation, employee commitment, and employee job performance. Table 4.1 shows that all the variables used in the study were reliable. Their scores were above 0.5 base score. The reliability scores ranged from 0.698 to 0.885 which were high scores. These significant reliability coefficients indicated that the variables were sufficient for the study and would effectively measure the objectives of the study.

### 4.3 Validity Test

The study examined the influence of work values orientation on employee job performance with the mediation role of employee commitment and moderation effect of employee competence. The study used 47 items to measure the variables' relationships using a sample size of 351 respondents. The study adopted factor analysis to test for the validity of the instruments. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was used to test the 47 instruments of measure. The output of factor analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's test validity output

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.828
Bartlett's Test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4527.987
	df	312
	Sig.	.000

Source: Data analysis (2023).

Table 4.2 shows that the results for factor analysis were strong at 0.828. This implied that the instruments were adequate in carrying out the study. Saunders et al., (2007) opined that KMO scores of between 0.8 and 1 indicate adequacy of sampling. The significant results of factor analysis for this study was indicated by chi square results ( $\chi^2 = 4527.987$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) which indicated the strength of variables used in the study.

### 4.4 Findings of the Study

The study sought to examine the role of employee commitment in the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. To achieve this objective, a null hypothesis stating that the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance is not mediated by employee commitment was developed and tested using four path analysis developed by Baron and Kenny (1986). This analytical technique was important to determine the mediation role of employee commitment in the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance.

The regression test for the hypothesis that the relationship between work values orientation and employee job performance is not mediated by employee commitment was therefore done in four steps as follows.

Table 4. Multiple regression outcomes for the influence of work values orientation and employee commitment on employee job performance

Model summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.460 <sup>a</sup>	.212	.207	1.28027

a. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, work values orientation

b. Dependent Variable: Employee job performance.

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	136.722	2	68.361	41.706	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	508.122	310	1.639		
	Total	644.843	312			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee job performance.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, work values orientation.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.246	.214		10.472	.000
1	Work values orientation	.188	.051	.201	3.709	.000
	Commitment	.331	.052	.346	6.375	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee job performance.

b. Predictors: Work values orientation, employee commitment.

Source: Test Results, (2023).

Table 4 shows results of multiple linear regression analysis for the influence of work values orientation and employee commitment on employee job performance. The results show that the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.460, suggesting a moderately strong relationship between work values orientation, employee commitment and employee job performance. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was 0.212, which suggests that 21.2% of employee job performance is due to a combination of work values orientation and employee commitment, while the remaining 79.8% is due to other factors outside the scope of this study.

Results of the analysis of variance show that F-ratio is moderately high and significant (F = 41.706, P < 0.05), implying goodness of fit for the regression model and thus its suitability for the analysis. Beta coefficient for work values orientation and employee commitment was significant ( $\beta = 0.346$ , T = 6.375, P < 0.05), indicating that employee job performance increased by 0.346 as a result of a unit change in employee commitment and by 0.201 due to unit change in work values orientation ( $\beta = 0.201$ , T = 3.709, P < 0.05).

The fact that the effect of employee work values orientation on employee performance is significant in the presence of a significant employee commitment implies that there is partial mediation. In other words, employee commitment partially mediates the relationship between employee work values orientation and employee job performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. The null hypothesis which predicted that employee commitment does not mediate the relationship between employee work values orientation and employee performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya is rejected. From Table 4.25, the regression equation is substituted as follows:

$$EJP = \beta_0 2.246 + \beta_1 0.201 WVO + \beta_2 0.346 EC + 0.52\epsilon$$

Where EJP is employee job performance, WVO is work values orientation, EC is employee commitment and  $\epsilon$  is the error term.

## 5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The finding that employee commitment mediates the relationship between employee work values orientation and job performance compares well with the study by Kidombo et al. (2012) who studied the mediating effect of employee commitment in the relationship between human resources strategic orientation and firm performance and found a significant relationship between affective commitment and firm performance. From this perspective, commitment is a necessary condition for employee work values orientation to affect their job performance although only partially as per the findings of this study.

The findings also compared well with findings of the study by Liao et al. (2012) on the mediating role of employee commitment in the relationship between work values orientation and job performance in the green

energy industry in Taiwan who found that employee commitment mediated the relationship between work values and job performance. However, it did not explain work values types namely intrinsic and extrinsic work values and how they separately influence performance. The study finding also compared well with study by Busienei (2013) who found that employee commitment significantly influenced performance in large manufacturing firms in Kenya.

This study's finding that the mediation role of work values orientation and employee job performance was statistically significant enhanced the generalization of findings. The findings further confirmed that the objective of the study that was meant to determine the mediating role of employee commitment in the relationship between employee work values orientation and job performance in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya was achieved.

Descriptive statistics showed that it was affective commitment that contributed the highest in employee commitment, followed by normative commitment while continuance commitment scored the lowest. This implied that it was employee affection for their organization that plays a major contributory role in work values orientation - employee job performance relationship. This finding corroborates the findings of the study by Meyer and Allen (1991) who found that there was a strong relationship between affective commitment and employee performance.

### *5.1 Study Conclusions*

The study found that the influence of employee work values orientation on job performance was moderate but statistically significant. The descriptive analysis also showed that all the dimensions of commitment that is, affective commitment, continuance and normative commitment were moderately demonstrated in the industry. The study concluded that employee commitment partially mediated the relationship between employee work values orientation and job performance. The significant outcome meant that the second objective was determined, and that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted that employee commitment mediates the relationship between employee work values orientation and job performance.

### *5.2 Recommendations of the Study*

The study found that the influence of work values orientation on employee job performance was significant. Findings showed that 11 % of employee job performance was attributed to employee work values orientation. The remaining 89 % was attributed to other factors that the study did not consider. This significant finding was an insight to industry managers to enhance exhibition of employee work values orientation in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. In order to reap the benefits of the concept in enhancing employee job performance, the study recommends that the industry should review their policies to include clear guidelines on enhancing intrinsic and extrinsic work values in areas such as compensation and benefits, bureaucracy and career management. Clear understanding and focus on the two dimensions of work values orientation will cause employee job performance to improve significantly.

### *5.3 Study Limitations*

Some limitations were encountered in the research process. However, mitigation measures were taken so that the limitations could not compromise the quality of findings. The study adopted positivist paradigm which has been criticized for failing to acknowledge fragmentations of disorganized units that are distinct from each other and can only be observed through individual interactions, for example measuring variables of social phenomena through quantification cannot be absolutely perfect. Hence limitations of positivist's paradigm in social analysis may have crept into the study and its findings because the quantitative nature of the study narrows the study to measures that can be quantified omitting social aspects that may not be quantified.

Although the use of the employee as a unit of analysis was important for the study, the use of questionnaires was expected to enhance objectivity. However, the limitations of individual perception and attitude would lead to bias in choosing appropriate scales hence personal bias in responses could not be completely eliminated. Perceptions and individual attitudes present issues of social bias and self-presentational concerns which may interfere with the predictive power of the variables.

In addition, the study adopted cross sectional survey, which looks at a phenomenon at a particular point in time. Some variables like work values orientation, commitment and competence require a long period of time for their effects to manifest in strength. Though employee length of service may suggest some degree of variables manifestations, there are many underlying behavioral aspects that may not be determined by length of service alone but would require other intervention measures for them to manifest for example employee competence would require continuous reskilling for one to be significantly competent. Hence cross sectional survey could be limiting to that extent.



**Informed consent**

Obtained.

**Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal and publisher adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

**Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

**Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

**Open access**

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